

# FACTS

- WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT WHAT YOUR PHILOSOPHER BELIEVES?
- WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHERS DEFINITION OF\* :
- REASON
- NATURE
- HAPPINESS
- PROGRESS
- LIBERTY

(\*you may need to infer using your notes and the source document)

# CAUTIONS

- WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL CAUTIONS, PITFALLS, OR WHAT MIGHT GO WRONG WITH ORGANIZING GOVERNMENT OR SOCIETY BY THIS PHILOSOPHY?

# BENEFITS

- WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS, POSITIVE THINGS, WHAT IS "RIGHT" ABOUT ORGANIZING SOCIETY OR GOVERNMENT IN THIS WAY?

# QUOTES

- WHICH THREE QUOTES FROM YOUR SOURCE DOCUMENT BEST ILLUSTRATE YOUR PHILOSOPHERS ARGUMENT?

CHAPTER  
**22**

Section 2

PRIMARY SOURCE *from A Vindication of the Rights  
of Woman*  
by Mary Wollstonecraft

*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, published by the English writer and reformer Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792, is one of the earliest feminist essays. According to this excerpt, how did Wollstonecraft feel about the education of women?*

I have sighed when obliged to confess that either nature has made a great difference between man and man or that the civilization which has hitherto taken place in the world has been very partial. I have turned over various books written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but what has been the result?—a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity. One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; . . . the civilized women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect. . . .

Yet, because I am a woman, I would not lead my readers to suppose that I mean violently to agitate the contested question respecting the equality or inferiority of the sex; but . . . I shall stop a moment to deliver, in a few words, my opinion. In the government of the physical world it is observable that the female in point of strength is, in general, inferior to the male. This is the law of nature; and it does not appear to be suspended or abrogated [abolished] in favor of woman. A degree of

physical superiority cannot, therefore, be denied—and it is a noble prerogative [right]! But not content with this natural preeminence, men endeavor to sink us still lower, merely to render us alluring objects for a moment; and women, . . . do not seek to obtain a durable interest in [men's] hearts, or to become the friends of the fellow creatures who find amusement in their society.

I am aware of an obvious inference: from every quarter have I heard exclamations against masculine women; but where are they to be found? If by this appellation [name] men mean to inveigh [protest] against their ardor in hunting, shooting, and gaming, I shall most cordially join in the cry; but if it be against the imitation of manly virtues, or, more properly speaking, the attainment of those talents and virtues, the exercise of which ennobles the human character, and which raise females in the scale of animal being, when they are comprehensively termed mankind; all those who view them with a philosophic eye must, I should think, wish with me that they may every day grow more and more masculine.

*from Barbara H. Solomon and Paula S. Berggren, eds.,  
A Mary Wollstonecraft Reader (New York: New American  
Library, 1983), 267–269.*

## Discussion Questions

1. **Analyzing Causes and Recognizing Effects** According to Wollstonecraft, what happens when women are not properly educated?
2. **Clarifying** What is Wollstonecraft's opinion of the equality of men and women?
3. **Making Inferences** Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that a woman's education should primarily teach her to become a better wife and mother. How do you think Wollstonecraft would have reacted to his views?

## BECCARIA\*\*

Historically, we will see that laws have usually been created by the emotions of the few to address temporary or favorable circumstances. Laws should be dictated by a cool examination of human nature and seek to create the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Justice is the bond that keeps the interest of individuals united and keeps them from returning to barbarity. Punishments should seek only to maintain this bond by preventing the criminal from doing injury to society. The torture of a criminal during the course of his trial is meant to force confession,. No man can be judged criminal until he is found guilty; nor can a society take from him the public protection until it has been proved that he violated the conditions on which it was granted. The punishment of death is offensive to society, from the example of barbarity that it provides. Is it not absurd, that the laws, which detest and punish homicide, should in order to prevent murder, publically commit murder themselves...? Would you prevent crimes? Let the laws be clear and simple, let the entire force of the nation be united in their defense, let them be intended rather to favor every individual than every class of man...

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\*\* Language simplified from original text.

## ROUSSEAU \*\*

Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. How did this change come about?... at some time mankind reached a point when the disadvantages of remaining in a state of nature outweighed the advantages.

Men, being human cannot develop new powers. But they can unite and control the powers they already have. Men in the state of nature could get together, pooling their strength in a way that would permit them to meet any challenge. They had to learn to work together under central direction.

A real concentration of human powers could only be brought about by an agreement among individual men. The problem is that such an agreement to work together would force man to give up some of his natural independence. In the state of nature each individual man relies on his own strength and his own freedom of action to protect and preserve himself. How can man limit his strength and his freedom of action without injuring himself?

Some type of agreement must be found which can rally the whole community together for the protection of the person and property of each of its citizens in such a way that each man, because he is a voluntary member of the agreement, still obeys his own will and hence remains as free as he was before. This type of agreement can be found in the social contract.

The essence of the social contract can be stated simply: Each individual surrenders all his rights to the community. Since each man surrenders his rights without reservation, all are equal. And because all are equal, it is to everyone's interest to make life pleasant for his fellows.

Since all rights have been surrendered to the community without reservation, no one has any claim against the group. If any rights were left to the individuals, then each man would try to get more and more rights for himself. Such a situation would mean that a state of nature still existed. All rights must be surrendered; none may be reserved.

The heart of the idea of the social contract may be stated simply; Each of us places his person and authority under the supreme direction of the general will; and the group receives each individual as an indivisible part of the whole.

In order that the social contract may not be a mere empty formula, everyone must understand that any individual who refuses to obey the general will must be forced by his fellows to do so. This is a way of saying that it may be necessary to force a man to be free; freedom in this case being obedience to the will of all.

The most ancient of all societies, and the only one that is natural, is the family: and even so the children remain attached to the father only so long as they need him for their preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved. The children, released from the obedience they owed to their father, and the father, released from the care he owed his children, return equally to independence. If they remain united, they continue so no longer naturally, but voluntarily. The family may then be called the first model of political societies: the ruler corresponds to the father, and the people to the children; and all being born free and equal, [give up] their liberty only for their own advantage.

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\*\* Language has been simplified from original text.

## VOLTAIRE \*\*

As men, we are all equal. However, all men are not equal members of society. Men play different parts in the theater of the world based on their talent and intelligence. As a result, the fact that men are equal does not mean that one man cannot be subordinate to another.

All men have a natural right to write and say whatever they want. It is true that there are many boring books, but there are none which have done any real evil. If a book is published and its ideas offend your ideas (assuming you have ideas) don't become outraged and persecute the author -- just don't read it!

An intelligent man should not accept all religious beliefs. He should only accept those beliefs about God that are based on reason and common sense. However, a man should not be persecuted because of his religious beliefs.

People are always asking what is the best form of government. Democracy is not a good form of government because the common people are not capable of governing themselves. ... The best government is one in which all ranks of men are equally protected by the laws. This type of government is best achieved by an intelligent, good and fair king. It does not matter how much power the king has as long as he fights against laziness and stupidity and provides a legal system under which all men are equal.

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\*\* Language has been simplified from original text.

## LOCKE \*\*

To understand political power we must consider the condition in which nature puts all men. It is a state of perfect freedom to do as they wish and dispose of themselves and their possessions as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature. They need not ask permission or the consent of any other man.

The state of nature is also a state of equality. No one has more power or authority than another. Since all human beings have the same advantages and the use of the same skills, they should be equal to each other. The state of nature is governed by the law of nature. The law of nature is Reason. Reason teaches that all men are equal and independent, and that no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions. All men are made by one all-powerful and wise Maker. All men are servants of one master who sent them into the world to do His business. The Maker has put men naturally into a state of independence, and they remain independent until they choose to become members of a political society.

If a man in the state of nature is free, if he is absolute lord of his own person and possessions, why will he give up his freedom? Why will he put himself under the control of any person or institution? The obvious answer is that the rights in the state of nature are constantly exposed to the attacks of others. Since every man is equal and since most men do not concern themselves with equity and justice, the enjoyment of rights in the state of nature is unsafe and insecure. Hence each man joins in society with others to preserve his natural rights to life, liberty and property.

Since men hope to preserve their property by establishing a government, they will not want that government to destroy this objective. When the government tries to destroy or take away the property of the people, or tries to reduce them to slavery, they put themselves into a state of war with the people who can then refuse to obey the laws. When the government tries to gain or give someone else absolute power over the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, they abuse the power which the people had put into their hands. It is then the right of the people to establish a new government to provide for their safety and security.

...It will be said that this philosophy may lead to frequent rebellion. To which I answer such revolutions are not caused by every little mismanagement in public affairs. But if a long train of abuses, lies and tricks make a government's bad intentions visible to the people, they cannot help seeing where they are going. It is no wonder that they will then rouse themselves, and try to put the rule into hands of a government which serve the purpose for which they had originally established a political society -- that purpose being to protect their life, liberty and property.

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\*\* Language has been simplified from original text.

## HOBBS \*\*

The government of man is the most complicated and difficult job on earth. It is the most difficult and complicated because men are very competitive, have an overwhelming desire for wealth and possessions (especially the wealth and possessions of other men), *men are emotional* hot-tempered and have a tendency to fight. Because the government of man is the most difficult and complicated task on earth we must allow every weapon of psychology and power to those who undertake it.

Government is necessary, not because man is naturally bad - for it is no sin to have desires and emotions - but because man naturally cares more about himself than society.

Before there was government, man had lived in a condition of perpetual war, actual or potential. It was every man against every man. Life without government was lawless, violent, fearful, nasty, brutish and short.

A ruler to really be the ruler must have absolute power, for without it he cannot ensure individual security and public peace. To resist him is to violate the **social contract** which every person in ~~the~~ community has implicitly agreed to by accepting the protection of its head. The obligation of subjects to the ruler is understood to last as long as and no longer than the ruler has the power to protect to protect them. *However....*

Revolution is always a crime .... It is always against the law and unjustified because the ruler makes up the laws and determines justice ;

The ruler does not rule by divine right, since his power is derived from the people; but his authority must not be limited by a popular assembly, or by law, or by the church.

Absolutism is necessary for when power is shared, as between king and parliament, there will soon be conflict, then civil war, then chaos, the insecurity of life and property; and since security and peace are the ultimate needs of society, there should be no separation, but full unity and concentration of governmental powers. Where powers are divided there is no true ruler, and where there is no ruler there will soon be no state.

Consequently, the only logical form of government is monarchy, It should be hereditary, for the right to choose his successor is part of the absolute ruler's absolute authority, again the alternative is anarchy.

The people are so readily moved by demagogues\* that control must be exercised by the government over speech and press; there should be strict censorship... There is to be no nonsense about individual liberty, private judgment or conscience, anything that threatens the ruler's authority and therefore the public peace, should be stopped at the source. How could a state be governed, or protected in its foreign relations, if every individual remained free to obey or not to obey the law according to his private opinions ?

\* demagogue: Leader who seeks support by appealing to popular desires & prejudices rather than rational argument.

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## MONTESSQUIEU \*\*

We must always remember the difference between independence and liberty. Liberty is the right of doing whatever the law permits. If a citizen could do what the law forbids he would no longer be possessed of liberty, because all of his fellow citizens would have the same power...

Constant experience shows us that every man who is given power is apt to abuse it.... to prevent this abuse, it is necessary that power should be a check to power. In every government, there are three sorts of power: the legislative; the executive and the judiciary.

Using legislative power, the prince or magistrate enacts temporary or permanent laws, and amends or does away with those that have been already made. Using executive power, he makes peace or war, sends or receives embassies, establishes the public security, and provides against invasions. Using judiciary power he punishes criminals, or determines disputes that arise between individuals.

Political liberty can be defined as the peace of mind that each man has about his personal safety. In order to have this liberty, it is necessary that the government be organized so that as one man need not be afraid of another.

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty; because suspicion may arise for fear that the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws and then execute them in a tyrannical manner.

There is also no liberty if the judiciary power is not separated from the legislative and executive. If the judiciary power was joined with the legislative, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control; for the judge would be then the legislator. Were it joined to the executive power, the judge might behave with violence and oppression.

In a country of liberty every free man ought to be his own governor. As a result, the legislative power should reside in the whole body of the people. But since this is impossible in larger states, and in small ones is subject to many inconveniences, the people should elect by representatives who will serve as the legislators.

The executive power ought to be in the hands of a monarch, because the executive branch of government often needs to make decisions quickly and decisively. As a result, it is better that the executive branch be controlled by one than by many. On the other hand, whatever depends on the legislative power is oftentimes better controlled by many than by a single person...

Political liberty consists in security, or, at least, in the opinion that we enjoy security. This security is never more dangerously attacked than in private or public accusations. It is, therefore, on the goodness of criminal laws that the liberty of the subject principally depends.. when the subject has no fence to secure his innocence, he has none for his liberty.

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